

address where your spouse sleeps at night?" and to top it all off, taxpayer money was used again to produce and mail this intrusive questionnaire.

The response on Capitol Hill has been overwhelming. On January 6, Senators GRAMM and HUTCHINSON and Representative BONILLA wrote to Attorney General Janet Reno and asked her to intervene on behalf of the military voters. The Department of Justice answered that they cannot act on this until a judgment is rendered. The Senators also received the Legal Service's chairman to investigate the lawsuit and cut off all Federal funds.

On February 5, Senators GRAMM and HUTCHINSON introduced the Military Voting Rights Act of 1997. This bill will guarantee the right of all active military personnel, Merchant Marine, and dependents to vote in Federal, State, and local elections. This same bill has been introduced in the House by HENRY BONILLA and myself. We are fighting the battle here in Washington, and others are on the frontlines in Texas. A united front will stop this kind of reckless activism from encroaching on the rights of all Americans.

I think this ridiculous lawsuit is a blatant challenge to the military's right to vote and sets a dangerous precedent for the denial of basic rights, the power of judges to interfere with valid election results. It used to be standard practice to impeach judges who nullify elections. Maybe it ought to be again.

VOTE AGAINST HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 58 TO DECERTIFY MEXICO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. REYES] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to urge my colleagues to support the President's decision to certify Mexico and vote against House Joint Resolution 58 to decertify Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, this is an issue that I know something about. Before being elected to Congress, I spent more than 26 years as a member of the U.S. Border Patrol enforcing this Nation's interdiction laws. I have personally observed Mexico's commitment to stem the tide of drug trafficking and have witnessed its strong cross-border drug interdiction efforts. I have been on the front lines in the so-called war on drugs, and I am here today to tell my colleagues that this resolution to decertify Mexico may be only symbolic to us, but it has with it some serious implications and consequences to those of us that live along the border, and I do not mean just people that live exclusively in Mexico.

We have developed a spirit of cooperation with Mexico in many areas: trade, environment, immigration, as well as drug interdiction. Our economies are interdependent along the bor-

der. In fact, more than 280 million people passed back and forth between Mexico and the United States during fiscal year 1996.

A vote to decertify Mexico would greatly jeopardize the spirit of cooperation we have developed with Mexico. In addition, the threat of decertification causes the peso to plunge, as we saw late last month, which not only has an adverse effect on the Mexican economy, but can also increase the pressures on our border communities and has the potential to increase illegal immigration.

Drug trafficking is not just a Mexican problem or issue. We on the northern side of the border must do more to stem the demand for illicit drugs. The good news is that the number of people using drugs last month declined. The bad news is an estimated 12.8 million Americans, or about 6 percent of the household population aged 12 and older, have used illicit drugs within the past 30 days.

Illegal drugs are readily available almost anywhere in the United States. We have not done enough to deter drug use among our Nation's children and in our Nation's neighborhoods. Illegal drug trafficking is not just a Mexican problem, it is our problem, and we must do more to reduce drug use and not just point fingers at our neighbor to the south.

Mexico has taken a number of steps in the last year to strengthen its efforts to fight the spread of illegal drugs, and they have done so by aggressively fighting corruption, they have done so by overhauling Federal agencies and recruiting qualified personnel. They have done so by strengthening counter-drug cooperation with the United States, and they have done so by improving their extradition policy. All of these things produce positive results in Mexico's fight on drugs.

The Republic of Mexico has been certified since 1986, and, moreover, the historical relationship between Mexico and the United States has been one of increasing cooperation and furtherance of mutual interests. Over the past 10 years our southern neighbor has cooperated with our efforts to stem drug trafficking while at the same time dealing with severe economic, political, and serious trade developments.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to address the basic problems surrounding the certification process, then let us do that. If we are serious about our efforts to combat drug abuse, then we need to do better on our side of the border. But this resolution does not resolve anything. It does not do anything to take drug dealers off the street, it does not do anything to help law enforcement agencies on our border, and it does not do anything to promote good will and understanding with our neighbors in Mexico. It only strains our relationship with our neighbor, and it is very counterproductive.

When all is said and done, Mr. Speaker, more is said than actually done. I

urge all of my colleagues to refrain from political posturing in the name of fighting drug trafficking and to oppose this resolution.

OPPOSE HASTY ACTION ON REVISING THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 21, 1997, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to express my strong opposition to hasty action on the issue of revising the Consumer Price Index to adjust Federal income tax and benefit programs. Congress should closely examine the technical issues involving the Consumer Price Index until it has all the information needed to make policy changes in this area. A trillion dollars in tax increases and benefit restraints in programs like Social Security would affect too many millions of people to make decisions on the basis of incomplete information.

After all, it took a panel of five professional economists 2 years to sort out these issues in producing a report, which is known as the Boskin report, which came out last December. Members of Congress need to carefully consider the main issues in this report and judge for themselves whether its recommendations for congressional action are warranted or not.

The Consumer Price Index is produced by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the same agency that generates employment and unemployment figures. The CPI is a fairly old statistic, and a committee headed by George Stigler reported to the JEC in 1961 its finding on issues related to this index involving product substitution, product quality changes, updating market baskets, treatment of new products, and a number of other issues. More recently, the Boskin Commission report reviewed many of these same issues, and this report has sparked considerable controversy.

I think it is fair to say that although there is consensus that the CPI may be overstating inflation, the extent of the overstatement is very debatable and questionable. It is also worthwhile to note that Congress, rightly or wrongly, choose to index a variety of Federal benefits and tax provisions after the Stigler committee issued its report in 1961. There would seem to be ample reason for Congress to examine these issues carefully before making hasty policy decisions.

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Now, as I have pointed out, the policy decisions made regarding the CPI would affect millions of Americans. According to a recent Joint Economic Committee analysis, about 40 percent of the direct effects of legislative reductions to the CPI would comprise tax